

# The Significance of Dien Bien Phu (1954)

by Brad Seidman and Charles De Jesus

Indochina, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, became a French colony in the 1880s. Like other 19th century European powers looking to establish global empires, France used the spread of Christianity to insert themselves into Indochinese society. However, this was merely a pretext to establish political control and exploit Indochina's natural resources, particularly rubber. France's goals were summarized by Prime Minister Jules Ferry with the remark, "Colonial policy is the daughter of industrial policy." French actions were continually met with resistance by the people of Indochina. In 1858, the Emperor Thieu Tri unsuccessfully sought to limit the activities of foreigners in Vietnam and between 1885 and 1916 the Vietnamese mounted a series of rebellions. At the Versailles Conference at the end of World War I, a Vietnamese delegation tried to petition for an end to French colonialism, but it was barred from participation.

During the 1920s, a figure emerged who brought unity to the different factions fighting against the French. Nguyen Tat Than, also known as Ho Chi Minh, joined the French Communist Party in 1920 and secured the support of the newly established Soviet Union for his movement. Ho Chi Minh believed that "All subject peoples are filled with hope by the prospect that an era of right and justice is opening for them. . . in the struggle of civilization against barbarism." He declared, "If you force us into war, we will fight. The struggle will be atrocious, but the Vietnamese people will suffer anything rather than renounce their freedom."

The situation in Vietnam fundamentally changed with the onset of World War II. The defeat of France by Germany led to Japanese occupation of the former French colony. From 1940 until 1945, the Viet Minh (Front for the Independence of Vietnam), under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, fought a guerrilla war against the Japanese. In July, 1945, Allied leaders decided to partition Vietnam, placing the south under British authority and the north under the Chinese. However in August, the Viet Minh captured Hanoi and proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Chinese withdrew, but the British turned control over the south to France, which wanted to reestablish its colonial empire. In 1946, the Viet Minh began their struggle against the French.

Bao Dai, the nominal Emperor of Vietnam, abdicated and told the French, "You would understand better if you could see what is happening here, if you could feel this yearning for independence that is in everyone's heart, and which no human force can any longer restrain. Should you re-establish a French

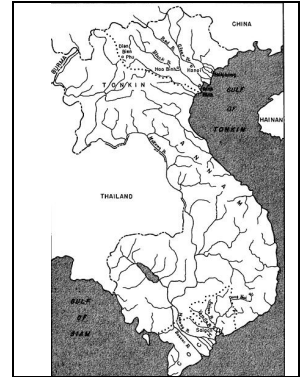
administration here, it will not be obeyed. Every village will be a nest of resistance, each foreign collaborator an enemy."

With financial support from the United States, French forces tried to regain control over Vietnam until they were defeated by the Viet Minh at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in April, 1954. In that battle, there were 1,500 French killed, 4,000 wounded and 10,000 soldiers taken as prisoners. In July, 1954, the Viet Minh and France signed an armistice and France agreed to withdraw all of her troops by July 1956.

## Global Impact of Dien Bien Phu

In 1962, Franz Fanon, a French trained psychiatrist who was working in Algeria in the middle of its independence struggle explained the importance of Dien Bien Phu to all third world revolutionary movements. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon wrote, "The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu is no longer, strictly speaking, a Vietnamese victory. Since July 1954, the questions which colonized people have asked themselves has been, 'What must be done to bring about another Dien Bien Phu? How can we manage?' . . . This encompassing violence does not work upon the colonized people only; it modifies the attitude of the colonists who become aware of manifold Dien Bien Phus."

A useful video for teaching about the French in Vietnam is the first episode of the PBS series, *Vietnam: A Television History*. It chronicles French colonialism and Vietnamese resistance. In the document-based assignment that follows, students examine the origins of French imperial policy, the struggle to overthrow it, and the global consequences of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu.



**Document Packet: What were the global consequences of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu?**

Introduction: This document-based essay is based on documents (1-10). It is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of the documents have been edited. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Historical Context: Indochina, colonized by France in the 19th century, entered into a long struggle to achieve independence. The Indochinese were eventually victorious in 1954 after the battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Task: Using information from the documents and your knowledge of global history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay, in which you will be asked to:

Identify two (2) reasons why the French colonized Indochina.

Describe the reactions of the people of Indochina to French rule.

Explain how the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu affected their role on a global scale.

In your opinion, did France's defeat at Dien Bien Phu mark the end of an era? Explain.

Note: Be sure to use specific evidence cited in the documents as well as outside knowledge about Global history.

**Part A**

**1. Chronology of French Colonialism in Vietnam**

Source: <http://www.entrenet.com/~groedmed/Vietnam/viethistoryindex.html>

- 1789 - 1792. Dynastic war in Vietnam. Prince Nguyen Anh accepts military assistance from the French.
- 1801. Nguyen Anh triumphs and is proclaimed Emperor of Vietnam. The French became major figures in Vietnamese government, business, trade and military affairs.
- 1847. French warships fire on and defeat Vietnamese warships.
- 1858 - 1859. Emperor Thieu Tri, alarmed by European colonialism, limits the activities of foreigners, including Catholic missionaries in Vietnam. The restrictions are used to justify a French invasion.
- 1883. The Vietnamese Emperor signs a treaty effectively making Vietnam a French colony.
- 1885 - 1916. Vietnamese patriots mount a series of unsuccessful rebellions.
- 1919. A Vietnamese delegation is barred when it tries to present a petition for an end to French colonialism at the Versailles Conference.
- 1920. Ho Chi Minh joins the French Communist Party and secures support from the Soviet Union.
- 1932. Bao Dai becomes Emperor of Vietnam and seeks reform. He appoints Ngo Dinh Diem his prime minister.
- 1933. Diem resigns and seeks political asylum in Japan.
- 1939. Nationalist groups unite in Viet Minh (Front for the Independence of Vietnam), under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh.
- 1940 - 1944. Vietnam is occupied by Japan. The Viet Minh fight a guerrilla war against the Japanese.
- 1945. Allied leaders agree to a temporary partitioning of Vietnam. The south is placed under the British and the north under China. The Viet Minh capture Hanoi and proclaim the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Bao Dai abdicates as emperor and the Chinese withdraw. British troops return control of southern Vietnam to France.
- 1946. The Viet Minh fight against French efforts to restore colonialism.
- 1949. France offers Vietnam limited independence and asks Bao Dai to form a government. The Viet Minh refuse to recognize Bao Dai.
- 1950 - 1952. U.S. grants France aid to fight against the Viet Minh and sends a small military force to Saigon.
- 1953. French concentrate troops at Dien Bien Phu.
- 1954. Despite massive American financial assistance, the Viet Minh defeat the French at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Only 3,000 of a French force of 16,500 survive. In July, the Viet Minh and France sign an armistice. All combatants withdraw to either side of a line of demarcation. All French troops are to leave Vietnam by July 1956, when elections are to be held to choose a national government.

## 2. Justifications for French Colonialism

Source: Karnow, S. (1983). Vietnam, p. 55, 97.

Monsignor Pierre Joseph Georges Pigneau de Behaine (1787). “We must, with unquenchable ardor, propagate our sacred religion”

Jules Ferry, French Prime Minister (c. 1883). “Colonial policy is the daughter of industrial policy.”

Paul Doumer, French governor of Indochina (1902). “When France arrived in Indochina, the Annamites (Vietnamese) were ripe for servitude”.

1. According to these quotations, why did the French colonize Indochina?

**4. Ho Chi Minh.** Ho Chi Minh was a Vietnamese citizen and a communist leader who played a major role in unifying the factions fighting against the French in the 1920s and 1930s. When the country was divided in 1956, he became President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the northern section of the country. He died in 1969, before the country was reunified (Source: Karnow, p. 135).

“All subject peoples are filled with hope by the prospect that an era of right and justice is opening for them. . . in the struggle of civilization against barbarism. . . If you force us into war, we will fight. The struggle will be atrocious, but the Vietnamese people will suffer anything rather than renounce their freedom. . . You can kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours. But even at these odds, you will lose and I will win.”

1. What did Ho Chi Minh say to the French?
2. Based on this quote, do you think Ho Chi Minh should be considered primarily a communist or a nationalist?
3. In your opinion, if the struggle in war will be “atrocious,” is it worth the battle? Explain.

**5. Between 1940 and 1945, an occupying Japanese army controlled Vietnam.** “Supplies for the United States Embassy and Chungking are among the shipments held up because of the French- Japanese agreement for a cessation of all shipments of militarily valuable goods from Indochina into Nationalist China, it was learned today. French officials said the American supplies, consigned to Ambassador Nelson T. Johnson, were held up “temporarily” pending regularization of the Japanese inspection system, which is designed to prevent passage of any supplies that might be of use to Chinese armies in their “war of resistance” against Japan.” -*The New York Times*, July 25, 1940

1. According to this news item, what is happening in Vietnam?
2. In your opinion, should the Japanese be considered liberators or conquerors of Vietnam? Explain.

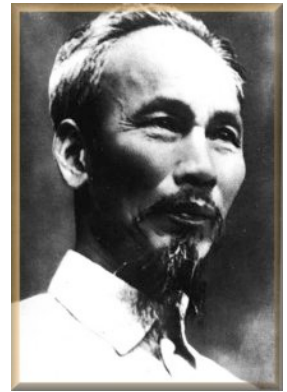
**5. Emperor Bao Dai.** Bao Dai became Emperor of Vietnam in 1932, while it was a French colony. During World War II, he cooperated with both the Vichy French and the Japanese. At the end of the war, the Viet Minh nationalists under Ho Chi Minh forced his resignation. When he transferred his mandate to govern Vietnam to Ho Chi Minh, he issued a warning to France: “Should you re-establish a French administration here, it will not be obeyed. Every village will be a nest of resistance, each former collaborator an enemy.” (Karnow, p. 147)

3. How does Bao Dai feel about the French efforts to re-establish a colony in Vietnam?

## 3. A French picture postcard showing the severed heads of Vietnamese insurgents, circa 1880s.



1. What does this picture postcard say about French attitudes toward the Vietnamese?



## 6. An Historian Examines Efforts to Reestablish a French Colony in Vietnam after World War II.

Source: Karnow, S. (1983) Vietnam.

A. "On the morning of November 23 [1946], [a French Colonel named] Dèbes demanded that the Viet Minh authorities evacuate their troops . . . within two hours. The Vietnamese, protesting that they were observing the cease-fire, telephone Hanoi for instructions. Dèbes gave them an additional 45 minutes, then issued the order. French infantry and armored units went through the city, fighting house to house against Viet Minh squads. French aircraft zoomed in to bomb and strafe while the cruiser *Suffren*, in the harbor lobbed shells into the city, demolishing whole neighborhoods of flimsy structures" (p. 156).

B. "[United States President] Truman did not actually sign the military aid legislation until July 26, 1950. But on June 28, three days after the Korean War broke out, [Secretary of State] Acheson persuaded him to order an 'acceleration' of assistance to the French. A day after that, and four weeks before the military aid bill becomes law, eight C-47 cargo aircraft flew across the Pacific to Indochina - not the only time that the United States was to act illegally in Vietnam. During the next four year, the United States was to spend nearly \$3 billion to finance the French in Indochina" (p. 177).

1. How did the French try to re-establish themselves in Vietnam after the defeat of the Japanese in World War II?
2. How did the United States respond to the French's efforts to re-colonize?
3. In your opinion, why did the United States decide to support the French?

**7. The fall of Dien Bien Phu.** Dien Bien Phu fell to the Viet Minh on May 7, 1954. At least 2,200 members of the French forces died during the siege and thousands more taken prisoner. Of the 50,000 or so Vietnamese who besieged the garrison, there were about 23,000 casualties including an estimated 8,000 killed.

"Vietminh insurgents wrested three strong points from the French today in their third major assault on besieged Dien Bien Phu. French positions were overrun in the eastern, northeastern and western sectors of the shrinking Dien Bien Phu redoubt. . . Fierce hand-to-hand fighting was reported in what might be the decisive battle for Dien Bien Phu. A French military spokesman said: "There have been heavy losses on our side and extremely heavy losses on the Viet Minh side." - *The New York Times*, May 3, 1954 p. 1.



Captured French troops.

2. In your opinion, why was the fighting at Dien Bien Phu so intense and the casualties so high?

## 8. Reactions to the French Defeat at Dien Bien Phu

A. "Dien Bien Phu," Editorial, *The New York Times* (May 6, 1954). "A few months ago it was an unheard of point in a far-away valley in the jungles of Southeastern Asia. Today Dien Bien Phu rings around the world as one of the epic battles of history. . . For fifty-six days wave after wave of besiegers have been thrown, for political purposes and with a reckless disregard of human life, against the isolated and outnumbered garrison. Dien Bien Phu may fall at last, . . but the defenders have exacted from the enemy so high a price that the end of the siege can never be called a defeat. . . It was held long enough to renew the free world's faith in the victory of the cause for which it stands."

B. "Dien Bien Phu Mourning Eclipses French World War Victory Fete," *The New York Times* (May 9, 1954). "The ninth anniversary of victory over Germany was observed here today by Frenchmen too struck by the defeat at Dien Bien Phu to feel any joy. 'A veil has fallen over France', Edouard Herriot, an 81-year old statesman said, his statement appeared to sum up the atmosphere, for never have there such solemn observances of an armistice that established Allied supremacy in World War II."

C. "After Dien Bien Phu, What?," *The New York Times* (May 9, 1954). "The fall of Dien Bien Phu marks the end of an era. The ultimate military, political and psychological reactions may either make or break the anti-Communist front in the Far East and France as a great power. . . A lost battle has tipped the scales of history in the past; Dien Bien Phu may prove, in future accountings, to be the balance point of contemporary history."

D. “You are all aware that the French and their Vietnam ally have suffered reverses, notably the fall of Dien Bien Phu after a superb defense. The present situation is grave, but by no means hopeless. In the present conference at Geneva, we and other free nations are seeking a formula by which the fighting can be ended and the people of Indochina assured true independence. So far the Communist attitude at Geneva is not encouraging.” – Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, June, 1954.

E. “Reason and peace have won out. After days and nights of hard negotiations, filled with anxiety and hope, the cease-fire has been signed. In my soul and my conscience, I am sure these are the best conditions we could have hoped for in the present state of things.” Premier Pierre Mendes-France, July 21, 1954.

1. According to *The New York Times*, how did the French public respond to defeat at Dien Bien Phu?
2. Why does the New York Times believe that Dien Bien Phu marks the end of an era?
3. How did the U.S. Secretary of State view the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu?
4. What did the French government decide to do after Dien Bien Phu?

### 9. Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam, July 20, 1954

The Geneva Agreements ended the war between France and the Viet Minh. Vietnam was temporarily divided until “free elections” could be held by July 20, 1956. Source: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/genevacc.htm>

*Article 1.* A provisional military demarcation line shall be fixed, on either side of which the forces of the two parties shall be regrouped after their withdrawal, the forces of the People's Army of Viet-Nam to the north of the line and the forces of the French Union to the south.

Article 16 (a). The withdrawals and transfers of the military forces equipment and supplies of the two parties shall be completed within three hundred (300) days.

*Article 34.* An International Commission shall be set up for the control and supervision over the application of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam. It shall be composed of representatives of the following States: Canada, India and Poland.

1. What were the results of the Geneva Accords?
2. In your opinion, which side had won the war? Explain.

### 10. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth* (1963). Fanon was a French trained psychiatrist from Martinique.

“In spite of all that colonialism can do, its frontiers remain open to new ideas and echoes from the world outside. . . . The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu is no longer, strictly speaking, a Vietnamese victory. Since July 1954, the questions which colonized people have asked themselves has been, ‘What must be done to bring about another Dien Bien Phu? How can we manage?’ . . . This encompassing violence does not work upon the colonized people only; it modifies the attitude of the colonists who become aware of manifold Dien Bien Phus. This is why a veritable panic takes hold of the colonialist governments in turn” (p. 70).

1. Does the author speak positively or negatively about colonialism? Explain.
2. Why does the author feel that the Dien Bien Phu victory is not only a victory for the Vietnamese people?
3. If you were a French colonial, how might you react after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu?

### Part B

Identify two (2) reasons why the French colonized Indochina.

Describe the reactions of the people of Indochina to French rule.

Explain how the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu affected their role on a global scale.

In your opinion, did France’s defeat at Dien Bien Phu mark the end of an era? Explain.

# Sputnik and the Space Race Transform the World

by Wayne Moran, Ken Weinberg and Rachel Fremont-Falletta

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite, into orbit around the Earth. It was about 22.4 inches in diameter and weighed about 184 pounds. The launching of Sputnik came in the midst of the Cold War, an ideological competition between the Communist bloc and the west for influence in the “Third World.” It shattered American confidence in what it thought was its technological and military superiority and gave the Soviet Union and the communist system an enormous propaganda boost. It was particularly disturbing because the missiles that launched a satellite into orbit could be adapted to carry nuclear weapons. In response, the U.S. government invested billions of dollars in the space and arms races, established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and devoted far more attention to science and math education.

In the decades following Sputnik, the Soviet Union and the United States sent people into space and eventually the United States landed men on the moon in 1969 and sent unmanned space ships to explore Mars. Because of the premium placed on miniaturization and heat resistance during reentry, the space race contributed to a number of major technological breakthroughs. They include computerization, the microchip, lightweight metal alloys, new kinds of plastics and ceramics.

Examine the excerpts from the newspaper articles and the political cartoons. (a) Answer the questions following each excerpt and the cartoons. (b) In your opinion, why are the responses from around the world so different from each other?

1. “The World Reacts,” *The New York Times*, October 13, 1957. “Many Britons were astonished that it was the U.S.S.R., not the U.S., that led the way into space. However, it was Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s view that despite ‘startling’ developments, the world peace still hinged on the West’s nuclear-bomb deterrent. In France, the Paris press echoed British surprise that the Soviet Union had stolen a march on the U.S. Washington was criticized for taking a ‘complacent’ view of Soviet capacities and for retaining laws that kept nuclear secrets from allies. The view was that Western brains should be pooled to compete with Soviet research, and that American tactical weapons should be made available to fellow NATO members. In Rome, the ‘Red moon’ was viewed as a warning to the West to increase its efforts in rocketry. It also brought home a realization that as a country capable of producing a Marconi and a Fermi, Italy was now far behind in science. In Vatican City, the newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* said that ‘God has no intention of setting a limit to the efforts of man to conquer space.’ In New Delhi, the ‘baby moon’ was the No. 1 topic of conversation, a major scientific and propaganda triumph for the Russians, and a come-uppance for the United States. In Cairo, the pro-Nasser press found vindication for the avowed policy of neutralism and satisfaction for what is considered the sudden obsolescence of Western bomber bases.”

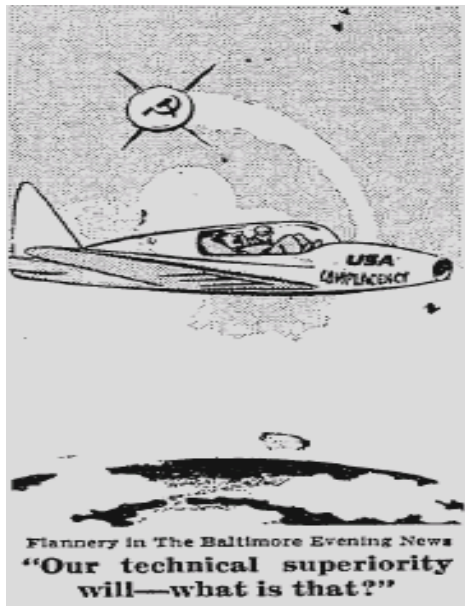
1. How did these country’s react to the launching of Sputnik?
2. What do these reactions have in common? In what ways are they different?

2. “Soviet Exploits Its New ‘Sputnik Diplomacy,’” *The New York Times*, October 13, 1957. “Since the Soviet space satellite has been in its orbit, Moscow has been showing what many are now calling sputnik diplomacy. No telescope or other artificial aids are needed to see and study the new Soviet policy. Nikita S. Khrushchev is personally spearheading the present offensive and acting as the principal public enunciator of the new policy. His over-all objective is plain: to win the maximum number of political and propaganda gains possible in the new world situation created by the space satellite’s vivid demonstration of Soviet long-distance rocket capabilities. Mr. Khrushchev seems to think that it is he and his country that can now speak and act from a position of strength, thus turning the tables on the United States. A major effort is being made to create the stereotype of the Soviet Union as being now the world’s strongest military and scientific power. A massive effort is now being made to break up the Free World’s defensive alliances, most particularly the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Corollary to this, of course, is the fact that, if successful, this effort would end the existence of the ring of bases for United States

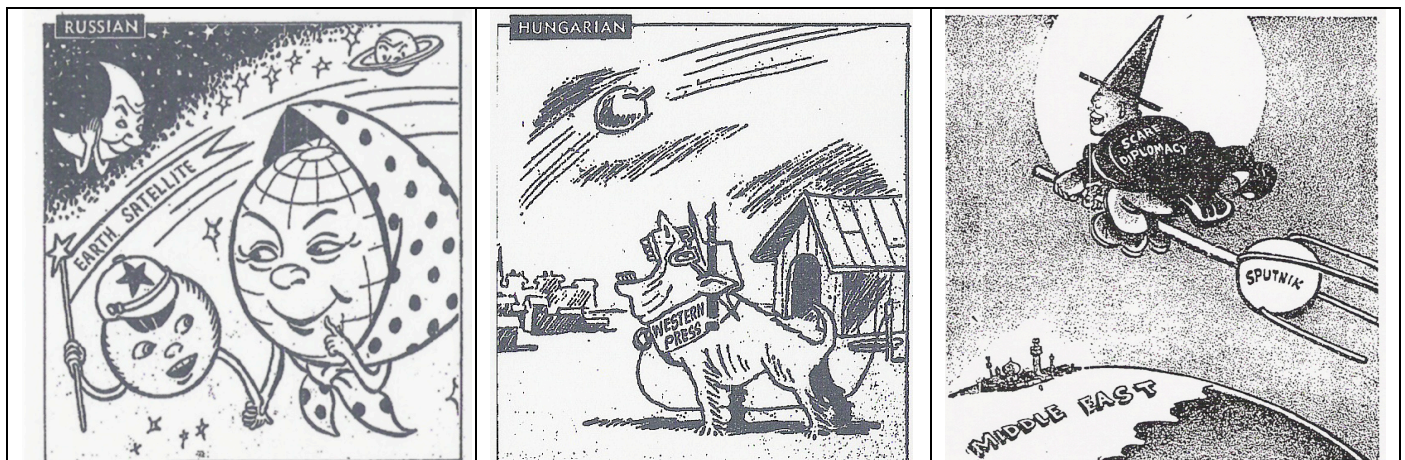


bombers which now exists around the Soviet empire. The Soviet Union now hopes that it may be possible to negotiate a disarmament agreement on its own terms. The Soviet Union now seeks to impose and to have generally accepted its hegemony over the Middle East. The Soviet Union demands that the West give up any thought of rolling back the Communist tide and surrender any hope of liberating the Communist countries.”

1. What is “Sputnik Diplomacy”?
2. According to *The New York Times*, how does Soviet Premier Khrushchev hope to take advantage of Sputnik?



1. What does the cartoon on the left credit for the Soviet Union’s being the first nation to launch a satellite?
2. What concerns are expressed in the two cartoons on the right?



1. How do the cartoons from the Soviet Union and Hungary (a member of the communist block) view Sputnik?
2. In your opinion, why does the cartoon on the right compare Soviet Premier Khrushchev to a witch?

**Final Activity:** Write an approximately 100 word long “Letter to the Editor” of *The New York Times* explaining your view of the significance of the launching of Sputnik.

## Apartheid South Africa and the Soweto Rebellion

by April Francis and Vanessa Marchese

The Soweto Rebellion in 1976 and the broader struggle to end apartheid in South Africa illustrate major historical and social studies principles. They show the power of non-violent civil disobedience to achieve fundamental human rights; the role children, students and other ordinary people can play as historical actors; and the ephemeral nature of what can appear as unchanging institutions in intransigent societies. The Black South African challenge to apartheid is a textbook example of how oppressed people can overcome their oppressors.

The European colonization of South Africa by Dutch (Afrikaner) and English settlers began in the 17th century. Great Britain secured control over the area as a result of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), but Afrikaner nationalists took over the government in 1948. During the 1940s and 1950s, White South Africans instituted a policy of apartheid, or separation, designed to guarantee their continued domination over the country and its resources. Under the leadership of Hendrik Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs and later prime minister, the rights of Black South Africans were systematically stripped away, they were denied citizenship and forced to live in either isolated, impoverished, rural communities or shanty towns surrounding major cities. The Southwest Township, popularly known as Soweto, was a Black African community outside of Johannesburg. By the mid-1970s its population was about 1 million people.

The leading organization in the struggle to defeat apartheid and win majority rule for Black South Africans was the African National Congress, founded in 1912. In the 1950s it was headed by Albert Luthuli, who won a Nobel Peace Prize. In 1961, Luthuli was succeeded by Nelson Mandela, who was imprisoned by the government for twenty-seven years. Other anti-apartheid groups included the Pan Africanist Congress, which led demonstrations in Sharpeville against the passbook system in 1960 where police opened fire and killed 67 people and the Black Consciousness Movement, headed by Steven Biko, which focused on developing Black Pride.

The Soweto Uprising of 1976 is one of the best known events in the struggle against apartheid. Many students, influenced by Steven Biko, would no longer accommodate to the injustices of the South African educational system. Under the Bantu Education Act (1953), the curriculum in Black schools was designed to reinforce the social and economic class structure of apartheid. Students were prepared to be laborers under the direction of White bosses or acquired skills needed in separate Black "Bantustans." The Soweto Uprising was precipitated by the requirement that Black students be taught Afrikaans, the language of their oppressors. This portion of the Bantu Education Act had never been carried out before.

On June 16, 1976, an estimated twenty thousand students marched in protest of apartheid and instruction in the Afrikaner language. When police arrived, shots were fired and students fled. During rioting over the next three days, government buildings were attacked and stores were looted. According to government sources, the official death toll was 176. Of these people, all but two were Black.

The struggle against apartheid in South Africa eventually won international support. When F. W. de Klerk became president of South Africa in 1989, he released Nelson Mandela from prison and began negotiations with the African National Congress for a post-apartheid South Africa. Democratic elections were held and in 1994 Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa.

Excellent resources for the study of the Soweto Uprising and the struggle against apartheid include three movies. *Cry Freedom* (1987) tells the story of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement. *Sarafina* (1992) focuses on the student movement and events in Soweto. *A Dry White Season* (1989) is about a White school teacher who ends up investigating the Soweto massacre. It includes powerful scenes depicting the student demonstrations and the deadly attack by the police.

Recommended internet sites include: <http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/africa/06/15/inside.africa/>;  
<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/specialprojects/june16/#>; <http://www.anc.org.za/people/mandela.html>;  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/>;  
<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/specialprojects/june16/>;  
<http://www-cs-students.stanford.edu/~cale/cs201/apartheid.hist.html>.



## 1. A Timeline of South African History

Sources: <http://news.bbc.co.uk> and <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/>

Examine this timeline of South African history. Using the timeline as your “notes,” write a brief narrative of the history of South Africa. What would you identify as the key events in the history of apartheid and the struggle to end it? Explain.

- 1651. Dutch (Afrikaner) settlers arrive in South Africa.
- 1756. Dutch establish European dominance in the region. Import slaves from West Africa, Malaysia, and India.
- 1806. Great Britain seizes control over the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa.
- 1867. Diamond mining begins in South Africa.
- 1886. Discovery of gold in South Africa.
- 1899-1902. British secure control over the entire region in the Anglo-Boer War.
- 1910. Great Britain creates the Union of South Africa.
- 1912. African National Congress is formed to organize Africans in the struggle for civil rights.
- 1913. The Native Lands Act gives 7.3% of the country’s land to Africans, who make up 80% of the population.
- 1948. Afrikaner nationalists win control over the government of the Union of South Africa and begin a policy of apartheid, or separation of the races.
- 1951. The Bantu Homelands Act. Lands reserved for Black Africans are declared independent nations. Millions of Blacks are stripped of South African citizenship. They need passports to enter white-controlled areas.
- 1952. Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act. Black Africans required to carry ID cards.
- 1953. The Preservation of Separate Amenities Act establishes separate public facilities.
- 1953. Bantu Education Act. The White controlled government supervises the education of all Blacks.
- 1960. Blacks in the town of Sharpeville refuse to carry passes. Government declares a state of emergency. 69 Black south Africans are killed and 187 people are wounded. The African National Congress is banned.
- 1961. The Republic of South Africa withdraws from the British Commonwealth of Nations.
- 1963. Nelson Mandela, head of the African National Congress, is imprisoned.
- 1966. Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd is assassinated.
- 1970s. South African Students Organization under the leadership of Steven Biko launches Black Consciousness movement. More than 3 million people forcibly resettled in Black ‘homelands.’
- 1976. Students in Soweto demonstrate against discrimination and required instruction in Afrikaans, the language of Whites descended from the Dutch. 575 people are killed and thousands are injured and arrested by the police. Steven Biko is beaten and dies in jail from his injuries.
- 1980s. International boycott of South Africa apartheid rule. Black civil disobedience increases.
- 1990. Nelson Mandela released from prison after 27 years.
- 1991. South African President F. W. de Klerk repeals apartheid laws and calls for a new constitution.
- 1994. Multi-party, multi-racial elections are held. Nelson Mandela is elected President of South Africa.



## 2. Apartheid South Africa

A. "Racism in South Africa, *The New York Times*, May 10, 1950, 29. "The policy of "apartheid" or racial separation in South Africa is now close to becoming a law. . . the government can set aside any area as a group area, in which members of a particular racial group can live or own property. . . the 8,000,000 Negroes are already held down by many restrictions, including a law that permits them to elect only three European members to Parliament, while 2,000,000 Europeans elect 150...the world saw as much racism as it wanted under the Nazis. . . clearly no outside pressure is going to stop South Africa, but the union cannot applaud the use of such means to achieve what it calls 'racial harmony'."

### B. Comparing Conditions for Black and White South Africans

Source: <http://www-cs-students.stanford.edu/~cale/cs201/apartheid.hist.html>

Year - 1978	Blacks	Whites
Population	19 million	4.5 million
Land Allocation	13%	87%
Ratio of average earnings	1	14
Share of National Income	20%	75%
Doctors per population	1 to 44,000 people	1 to 400 people
Infant mortality	20 to 40%	3%
Annual expenditure on education	\$45	\$696
Teacher - Pupil ration	1 to 60	1 to 22

### C. Segregated City Grows to 500,000

Source: *The New York Times*, May 11, 1964

"Thousands of black families live in the model township of Soweto and the South African government is eager to show that they have found a new life. . . Soweto is the fourth largest city in South Africa and the biggest urban concentration of black people in the country, nearly half a million people live in Soweto. . . on the boundary of the model township is the slum of Pimville. . . one room shacks house as many as 10 persons; a communal tap serves hundreds of people, the streets are muddy and undrained."



<http://www.damer.com/pictures/travels/southafrica>

**D. Black South African student:** "My awareness was limited because of my education, all the things that we were told at school, you know, about how life is. One of the things they wanted us to believe is that nobody can change the system as it is, in fact, that it is God's wish that we live this type of life. So that was limiting my awareness, because whenever I would see people having problems and sufferings, I would say this is God's will, you know. But because of the challenge that was presented to the system by the students, I began to realize that, no, these things are man-made and it is possible to change things."

#### Questions:

1. Why is *The New York Times* concerned about the South African policy of apartheid?
2. How does the apartheid system guarantee White rule?
3. According to the chart comparing conditions for Black and White South Africans, how has apartheid contributed to an unjust society?
4. The South African government claims Soweto is a model community. What evidence suggests this is an incomplete picture?
5. Why is the Black student unhappy about his education under the apartheid system?
6. Why does the Black student believe that change is possible?

**3. The Soweto Uprising and Massacre.** 1. Examine the documents on the Soweto uprising and massacre. Using these documents as primary sources, write a brief narrative of the uprising and massacre. Conclude with a discussion of whether the police response to the demonstrators was justified. 2. Read the African National Congress's response to the uprising and massacre. Based on your understanding of these events and the ANC statement, would you consider the Soweto Uprising a major event in world history? Explain.



A. "They opened fire. They did not give any warning. They simply opened fire. Just like that. Just like that. And small children, small defenseless children, dropped down to the ground like swatted flies. This is murder, cold-blooded murder." - Mark Mathabane



B. "I saw huge numbers of schoolchildren coming towards me. I got out of the car and started taking pictures. And I could see hands that (were gesturing) no pictures. I went over and said to them, 'Why do you say I can't take pictures?' They said, 'Because the police might be able to identify some of us.' And I said to them, 'a struggle without documentation is no struggle. . . Soweto was on fire. . . The children were angry. Ten-year-olds were in the streets picking up stones and throwing. Where there was anything burning, you would find these 10-year-olds, 9-year-olds, saying Power, Power. You realized that the political mood had changed.'" - Peter Magubane, a young photographer who lived in Soweto during the uprising.

**C. 6 Die in South Africa Riot After Black Student Protest. Source: *The New York Times*, June 17, 1976**

"At least six people died today when a demonstration by 10,000 black students against instruction in Afrikaans language turned into a riot. Two of the dead were students struck by a volley of police gunfire. . . black leader, the very Rev. Desmond Tutu said that black leaders "have been warning the government about something like this happening for a long time." More than 70 people were injured, 19 with bullet wounds, when the riot erupted in the black township of Soweto, 10 miles from Johannesburg. . . It continued from midmorning until after dusk. . . This area was sealed off from whites. . . It was the worst riot between the races in South Africa since the Sharpeville massacre on March 21, 1960 when police fired on a crowd of more than 5,000 demonstrating black Africans, killing 72 and wounding more than 170. . . The trouble began when the students gathered to protest a government regulation requiring the use of Afrikaans as the language of instruction for some subjects in the township schools. . The students complained that the regulation required them to cope with a third language, in addition to English and the African language most of them speak as a mother tongue. But the strikes had broader political overtones since Afrikaans is the language of South Africa's ruling Nationalist Party (white south Africans)."

**D. June 16, 1976. Soweto Uprising, Day One – A Timeline of Events**

Source: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/specialprojects/june16/>

7:00 AM: Not all the children who were to participate in the march knew about it on the morning of June 16th. For many it was an ordinary school day. The march planned by the Action Committee of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) was well organized and was to be conducted in a peaceful way. The leaders of the original march, mainly came from two high schools, Naledi High in Naledi and Morris Isaacson in Mofolo. The plan was that students from Naledi High were to march from their direction and pick up students from other schools on their way. The Morris Isaacson students were to march from their school doing the same until they met at a central point where they would proceed peacefully together to the Orlando Stadium.

7:30 AM. The first students gathered at Naledi High. At assembly the principal gave support to the children and wished them good luck. The first chairperson of the Action Committee, Tepello Motopanyane, addressed them and informed them that discipline and a peaceful march were to be the order of the day.

9:00 AM. 11 columns of students marched toward Orlando Stadium. Estimates of the number of students involved range from 1,000 to 10,000. The march was halted and Tietsi Mashinini climb up onto a tractor to address the crowd. He is reported to have said: "Brothers and Sisters, I appeal to you - keep calm and cool. We have just received a report that the police are coming. Don't taunt them, don't do anything to them. Be cool and calm. We are not fighting."

9:30 AM. The students continued on marching until they got to what is now Hector Petersen Square, close to Orlando High School, where the march came to a halt again. According to one report, "a white policeman lobbed a tear gas canister into the front of the crowd. People ran out of the smoke dazed and coughing. The crowd retreated slightly but remained facing the police, waving placards and singing. A white policeman drew his revolver. A single shot ran out. There was a split seconds silence and pandemonium broke out. Children screamed. More shots were fired. At least four students fell and others ran screaming in all directions." Students fled in different directions. Anger at the senseless killings inspired retaliatory action. Administrative vehicles and buildings were set on fire, a white official was pulled out of his car and beaten to death, and stores were burned and looted. As students were stopped by the police in one area they moved their protest action to others.

12:00 Noon. Schools were closed early at about 12:00. As more students were let out of school they joined the protesters.

9:00 PM. Armored police cars, later known as Hippos, started moving into Soweto. Official figures were that 23 people had been killed, but some reports estimated that it was at least 200.

**E. "UNITE! MOBILISE! FIGHT ON!"** Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress Reply to the Soweto Uprising and Massacre. Source: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/64-90/anvil.html>

The gun has played an important part in our history. The resistance of the black man to white colonial intrusion was crushed by the gun. Our struggle to liberate ourselves from white domination is held in check by force of arms. From conquest to the present the story is the same. Successive white regimes have repeatedly massacred unarmed defenseless blacks. And wherever and whenever they have pulled out their guns the ferocity of their fire has been trained on the African people. Apartheid is the embodiment of the racialism, repression and inhumanity of all previous white supremacist regimes. To see the real face of apartheid we must look beneath the veil of constitutional formulas, deceptive phrases and playing with words. The rattle of gunfire and the rumbling of Hippo armored vehicles since June 1976 have once again torn aside that veil. Spread across the face of our country, in black townships, the racist army and police have been pouring a hail of bullets killing and maiming hundreds of black men, women and children. The toll of the dead and injured already surpasses that of all past massacres carried out by this regime. . . .

That verdict is loud and clear: apartheid has failed. Our people remain unequivocal in its rejection. The young and the old, parent and child, all reject it. At the forefront of this 1976/77 wave of unrest were our students and youth. They come from the universities, high schools and even primary schools. They are a generation whose whole education has been under the diabolical design of the racists to poison the minds and brainwash our children into docile subjects of apartheid rule. But after more than twenty years of Bantu Education the circle is closed and nothing demonstrates the utter bankruptcy of apartheid as the revolt of our youth. . . .

The revulsion of the world against apartheid is growing and the frontiers of white supremacy are shrinking. Mozambique and Angola are free and the war of liberation gathers force in Namibia and Zimbabwe. The soil of our country is destined to be the scene of the fiercest fight and the sharpest battles to rid our continent of the last vestiges of white minority rule. The world is on our side. The OAU, the UN and the anti-apartheid movement continue to put pressure on the racist rulers of our country. Every effort to isolate South Africa adds strength to our struggle. At all levels of our struggle, within and outside the country, much has been achieved and much remains to be done. But victory is certain!



## Children of Darfur Portray a 21st Century Genocide

Adapted from “Children of Darfur Know About Life Amid Carnage,” by Felica Lee, *New York Times*, 7/6/05: E3



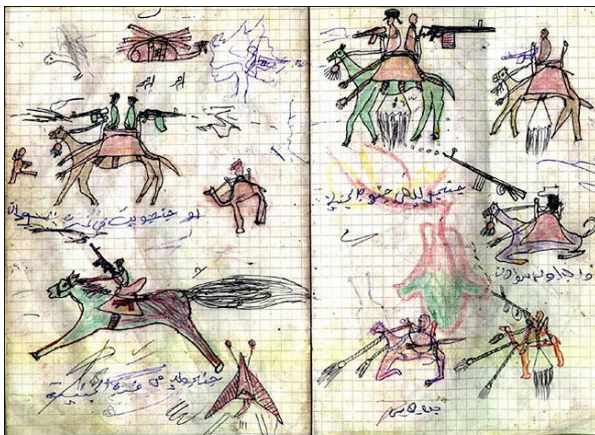
A helicopter attack on civilians in Darfur.

Darfur, in the Sudan, is the 21st century’s first genocide. Once again, most of the world stood by and took no action. The United Nations estimates that 200,000 people either starved to death or were killed in Darfur and 2.4 million people were displaced between February 2003 and July 2005. These acts of genocide grew out of a conflict between the Sudanese government and Islamic and Arab militias on one side and rebel groups who tended to be Black African and Christian. The militias, known as “janjaweed” [men on horses], shouted racial insults at Black Sudanese as it committed atrocities against civilian populations.

Many of these atrocities were documented in drawings by children. Human Rights Watch workers in refugee camps along Darfur’s border with Chad gave children crayons and paper to keep them occupied while they interviewed their parents about the ethnic violence. The twenty-seven drawings are part of a traveling exhibit called “The Smallest Witnesses: The Conflict in Darfur Through Children’s Eyes.” They can also be view on the internet at <http://www.hrw.org/photos/2005/darfur/drawings/>.

A crayon drawing by Taha, who is 13 or 14 showed helicopters in the sky and houses engulfed in flames. A drawing by 13-year-old Salah shows women screaming as they are being kidnapped and taken away to be raped. A third drawing shows men firing automatic rifles while riding horses and camels.

“These are not generic guns that a 10-year-old boy would draw but guns they’ve actually seen,” said Dr. Annie Sparrow, who is a pediatrician and researcher with Human Rights watch. Dr. Sparrow believes that the details in the drawings provide evidence of the involvement of the Sudan government in the genocidal attacks.



Automatic weapons fired from horses and camels.



Women being taken captive by raiders.



## The Suchman Inquiry Model and the Disappearing Aral Sea

by Catherine Snyder

Several years ago, I attended a New York State Geography Alliance Institute conducted by John Crawford where I learned about the disappearing Aral Sea. It was a fascinating topic, but I was not sure how I could teach it to my Global History and Geography students in a way that would capture their attention and address the economic and social consequences of geographic change. I decided to use the Suchman model, an inquiry-based method written for science teachers. The Suchman model asks students, working in small groups, to find the answer to a larger question by formulating yes/no questions based on a series of teacher “inputs.” After all the inputs are delivered and analyzed, student teams develop answers to the larger question. The questions for this lesson were simply, “So what?” and “Why should I care?” The Suchman Inquiry Model contains the following steps: (1) Select a problem and conduct research. (2) Introduce the process and present the problem. (3) Gather data. (4) Develop a theory and verify. (5) State the rules and explain the theory. (6) Analyze the process. (7) Evaluate. I was assisted in this project by Kerry Filiberto, an intern from the MAT Program at Union University.

**Background:** The Aral Sea crisis started during the Soviet era. In order to increase agricultural production, rivers feeding the Aral Sea were diverted for irrigation. This overuse led to lowering of the water levels in the Aral Sea and an increase in the salinization of the water. This caused a steep reduction in the number of species of animals living in and around the sea and decimated the local fishing industry. As the water level receded, salt and other pollutants in the water became air born, causing an increase in tuberculosis, various cancers, and other diseases among local populations. People living in the immediate vicinity of the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have suffered health problems and the loss of their livelihoods, drinkable water and the ability to grow food. However, the most serious problem involves Vozrozhdeniye, an island in the middle of the Aral Sea. The Soviets used the island to conduct research on biological and chemical weapons and as a storage facility for byproducts of nuclear testing. The remnants of that research are still there today. The receding water levels have resulted in a land bridge to the island which poses a major security and health risk. This is a multifaceted international crisis. The two countries bordering the sea do not have the means to clean up or contain the material left behind by the Soviets.



[http://www.fpif.org/briefs/maps/map\\_aral.jpg](http://www.fpif.org/briefs/maps/map_aral.jpg) map

**1. Select a problem and conduct research.** I teach this lesson within Global History and Geography 10 curriculum during the World Today unit. This lesson, which takes one 80 minute block, incorporates issues related to the Cold War, the environment, economics, health, terrorism and developing nations and is well worth the instructional time. During the questioning rounds, students will ask unexpected questions which will require quick reference to the material researched. In order to conduct this lesson, you will need fairly substantial background information on the topic. Plan to spend some time reading in order to feel comfortable carrying out this lesson model. There are several websites which provide up-to-date information on the status of the Aral Sea as well as photographs, satellite images and maps. Among the United Nations websites I have used are: <http://www.unep.org/vitalwater/24.htm> (United Nations Environment Programme, “The Shrinking of the Aral Sea: Socio-Economic Impacts”); <http://www.unep.org/vitalwater/25.htm> (United Nations Environment Programme, “Will the Aral Sea Disappear Forever?”); <http://www.environmenttimes.net/article.cfm?pageID=78> (The Environment Times, United Nations Environment Programme, “The disappearing Aral Sea”); <http://www.fao.org/NEWS/1997/970104-e.htm> (Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “Contaminated water devastates health across the Aral Sea region”); <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/1999/issue1/0199p38.htm> (United Nations Chronicle Online Edition, “Dry Tears of the Aral” by Beatrice Grabish).

**2. Introduce the process and present the problem.** Explain to the students that they will be investigating a world crisis and that at the end of the lesson, they must answer the following questions: “So what?” and “Why should I care?” They will conduct their research in teams of 4-5. There will be eight rounds of inputs for them to examine. All groups will receive the same input each round. After a few minutes to examine the input, groups must formulate yes-no questions to ask the teacher to gather further information. They need to pay attention to the other groups’ questions as that will help them to gather information and answer the lesson questions. Once the students understand the rules (one question per group per round, question must be a yes-no question, students must pay attention to other groups questions) you can proceed with the investigation.

**Sample Inputs** (Copies of each for every team. Photographs and maps are available on-line).

1. Color photograph of ship stranded in a sandy field with no water in sight with no other textual evidence.
2. An outline map of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan showing the Aral Sea in between them.
3. A bag of rock salt.
4. Two color satellite images of the area: one from the 1990s and one from the 2000s.
5. A bag of sand.
6. A collection of photographs of the shipping towns and people who used to make their living from the Aral Sea.
7. An article discussing the history of the region as a Soviet agricultural region.
8. A map of the region with a nuclear or danger sign over the island in the Aral Sea.

**3. Gather data.** Proceed through the eight inputs, allowing students a few minutes each round to examine the input and formulate a question. After each group has asked one question on that round’s input, pass out the next input. Complete all eight rounds in this manner (Note: I use 8 rounds because I teach in an 80 minute block and found that I can complete 8 rounds. Each round takes about 5-6 minutes. The number of inputs you choose will depend on the length of your class, class size, and your ability to secure resources for the lesson). As each round takes place, students keep the material from the previous rounds. This allows them to juxtapose the new information with previously gained knowledge. A variety of inputs insures that learners with a wide range of strengths and abilities can participate. Students actively try to figure out the mystery; putting the pieces together as the class progresses through the inputs. By forcing the students to ask questions that can only be answered with a “yes” or a “no”, they have to do disciplined thinking. It requires to put together yes-no questions in order to figure out the mystery. It is tempting to try to rephrase questions for students, but resist the temptation. The more you force them to frame clear and concise yes-no questions, the more authentic their learning. If you use this method for additional lessons, , students will become more proficient with each additional application. The first input I use with my students is a color photograph of a fishing boat marooned in the sand. Typically, students will ask questions like: “Was there a storm that put the boat there?” or “Was the boat no longer useable and therefore discarded?” If students ask a question that is not answerable by a yes or a no, you have to ask them to rephrase. Other teams should build on the information acquired by students who asked questions before them.



<http://www.irtc.org/ftp/pub/stills/2000-08-31/aral.jpg>

**4. Develop a theory and verify.** As the rounds continue, students will begin to grasp the scope of the tragedy and formulate theories to answer the questions: So what? Why should I care? You can allow “yes” theories to be written on the board so that other groups can try to clarify them further. As the rounds continue, an accumulation of “yes” theories will help the students answer the primary questions. When all the rounds of inputs are complete, allow students a few minutes to formulate answers they would like to present to the class. Invite groups to report their findings. Critique each consecutive theory, reinforcing correct conclusions and correcting misconceptions. At this point, incorrect theories can be eliminated from the board as well. Typical theories by students are: “The sea lost its water because people over farmed the area.” “The fishing industry and fish died because there wasn’t enough water.” “The people are sick because the water is salty and they can’t drink it.” “We should care because we should help them.” As the inputs progress and students try to layer all the pieces together, theories become more detailed. A group might put forth a theory: “We should care because people no longer have jobs, they are getting sick and Russia is not interested in helping them any more.” Or, “We should care because the chemicals left on the island by the Soviets is dangerous to everyone.”

**5. State the rules and explain the theory.** At this point in the lesson, students should have a few working theories on the board with which they agree. Teams should discuss the accumulated facts and decide whether one theory offers a better explanation than the others or if they need to combine theories. After class discussion, I take time to explain the whole situation to clarify any misconceptions that might have arisen. The full information is revealed so all students can answer the larger questions.

**6. Analyze the Process.** I strongly recommend teachers evaluate the process with students, especially if they will use this method again. Students reflect on the progression of questioning, critique the questions asked and brainstorm ways they could have made their inquiry more efficient or effective. The goal is to decide the best way to approach a puzzling new piece of information in the future.



Satellite photos, 1989 and 2003.  
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/>

**7. Evaluate.** During this step, students are invited to find interesting dilemmas of their own to investigate. This can be a homework assignment or project.

**Further Suggestions.** I have experimented with this model and made different modifications. I was able to complete the lesson in 50 minutes by giving the students more than one input at a time. I have also created inputs that are reusable by mounting photographs and maps on laminated card stock. Salt and sand samples are kept in plastic containers. I change the news articles from year to year. I give each group only one copy of the input so they have to share the resource and talk to each other. I find that a reflective writing assignment on the topic of the Aral Sea is the best homework assignment for this lesson. It allows me to check for misconceptions and assess the students’ depth of understanding of the problem. I provide websites for students to consult because they frequently want to learn more about the problem. I have seen this method for lessons on the Salem witch trials and on the rift between North and South Korea and I am in the process of assembling material on the Taliban in Afghanistan and the destruction of the Bamiyan or “Big Buddha.”

# Teaching Young Children about Native Americans and their Living Traditions

by Judith Singer (jsinger@liu.edu) & Lynette Field

In the summer of 2001, my husband and I were in Spokane, Washington during a Native American Powwow. Participants had traveled some distances, and they had arrived early to pitch tents, cook and prepare costumes for the traditional dances. There was music, dancing, native foods, and native crafts. As we looked around at the participants, we realized that these were extended families. This was not an occasion for tourists to gawk. It was an opportunity to renew acquaintances and to take pleasure in how the children had grown. It was an opportunity to reaffirm their cultures. The powwow did not reinforce the typical stereotypes whites hold of Native Americans. These people were not primitive, nor were they welfare recipients, alcoholics or operating Casinos. It is important for children to learn that Native Americans were and are people with viable cultures and with strong commitments to extended families. The books described below also reinforce the idea that Native peoples are human beings, struggling to maintain their cultural practices in spite of efforts of the past several centuries to wipe them out.

The first group of books discussed in this article look at the struggles of Native American peoples to live in and adapt to the modern world. They struggle to live in a world where other children make fun of them because they are “different.” They struggle to find and define home and live in two worlds at the same time. The second group of books emphasize the importance of traditional culture for Native Americans in shaping who they are.

## Adapting to another World

*Home to Medicine Mountain* by Chiori Santiago, illustrated by Judith Lowry (Children’s Book Press, 2002). For many years around the 1930’s Native American children were taken from their families and sent to government-run boarding schools, supposedly to make them ‘civilized.’ They were removed from their cultures and families and not able to practice their native languages or religious beliefs. In this book, two Maidu Indian boys are trying to get home to Medicine Mountain for the summer. It is a story about the importance of family and how these boys refused to be defeated in their quest to find their way home. Along the way, they encounter some excitement and adventure. I like the way this book created a captivating and adventurous story, while educating us about the sad fact that Native American children were taken from their families and sent to strange boarding schools. Intertwined in the sadness of reality is a very possible story about some children who stood up for themselves and tried to return home. A similar theme is examined by Eve Bunting in *Cheyenne Again* (Clarion Books, 1995), illustrated by Irving Toddy. In this story a boy is severely punished when he tries to escape.

*Eagle Song* by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by Dan Andreasen (Scholastic, 1999). This book tells the story of Danny, a young Mohawk boy who is ostracized by his Anglo peers, until his father comes to school and talks about the Iroquois culture with the children. This story depicts Danny’s experiences as a Mohawk boy moving to Brooklyn and struggling to fit in. It touches upon the readers’ experiences in shyness, fitting in and resolving conflicts. In the end, Danny is able to use his culture to make peace with the school bullies. He approaches one of them and says “My name is not Hiawatha and it isn’t Chief. My name is Daniel. . . maybe we could be friends. She’:kon. . . that means peace.” The book also introduces children to Native American folklore and religious beliefs, and helps children understand and sympathize with Danny’s situation.

*Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds* by Marcia Keegan (Viking Penguin, 1991). This book does a wonderful job of portraying the cultural life of a Native American child growing up in modern times. The main character, Timmy, lives in a house, works on a farm, rides his bike and plays on a Little League Baseball team. He is also very involved in his Pueblo culture. The book illustrates that Timmy is part of the Corn Clan and participates in Native American religious dances. We can use this book in the classroom not only to introduce aspects of the pueblo life, but also to encourage children to share and be proud of their culture and learn about others.

*Sky Dancers* by Connie Ann Kirk, illustrated by Christy Hale (Lee and Low, 2004). Native Americans have made important contributions to our way of life in twentieth century North America. In addition to an appreciation of beauty and of the need for ecological balance in nature, many of the Mohawk people became “Sky Walkers” in the earlier part of the twentieth century. These are the people who built the sky-scrappers, seemingly dancing from beam to steel beam as they worked. John Cloud’s father is one of these sky dancers, and John feels like he will burst for joy as he watches his father up so high he can hardly be seen.

NON-FICTION. To help children visualize the lives of Native Americans, we have included a work of non-fiction about a mother teaching her daughter to weave on a traditional loom, *Songs from the Loom: A Navajo Girl Learns to Weave* by Monty Roessel (Lerner, 1995). In this book, the author shares how his mother taught his daughter how to weave wool on a loom. It goes through the actual steps of weaving wool, while taking the reader through stories and traditions told by the grandmother to her granddaughter. This book also includes photographs, which are aesthetically attractive and help to solidify the non fiction aspect of the story to young readers.

**Struggling to Maintain Traditional Practices.** The second group of books is about the struggle to maintain traditional practices in the modern world. We start with *Keepers of the Earth – Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children* by Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by Carol Wood (Fulcrum, 1997). This book presents traditional tales from many different Native American tribes and cultures. Each story is accompanied by activities involving nature and the environment. It can be an important resource for any classroom. It can help students realize the value and respect Native Americans continue to place on nature. Many of the stories in this book and others emphasize the creation of the world and its people. Others are explanations of how things came to be as they are. The following stories represent some of these beliefs.

*Dancing Drum: A Cherokee Legend* by Terri Cohlene, illustrated by Charles Reasoner (Troll, 1991) is an excellent book to use in the classroom to teach about legends and folktales. In this story, Dancing Drum, a little Indian boy, tries to save his people from the wrath of the sun. Beyond expressing the Native American culture, this book also shows how cooperation between people can help solve problems.

*The Legend of the Bluebonnet* by Tomie de Paola, reteller and illustrator (Penguin, 1996). This folktale explains how the “Blue Bonnet” flower came to be. It is a good example of Native American culture in which nature and events are explained through folklore.

*Quillworker: A Cheyenne Legend* by Terri Cohlene, illustrated by Charles Reasoner (Sagebrush, 1996). Like many Native American folktales, this one explains how the Big Dipper was created. It reflects Native American culture in that many stories passed down through time and generations are used to explain the origin of things in nature.

*The People Shall Continue* by Simon Ortiz, illustrated by Sharol Graves (Children’s Book Press, 1988). This book uses poetry and vivid illustrations to convey the history of Native Peoples from the time before people were born and up to the present day. The book emphasizes the importance of learning Native American beliefs and values. “The Earth is the source of all life. . . Her children continue the life of the Earth.” “In order for our life to continue, we must struggle very hard for it.” As the Europeans came and destroyed their homes, took away their children, and took their land, it became very hard to fight back. But the people told their children, “This is the life that includes you. This is the land that is yours.” The poem concludes with an affirmation that all the poor people of the world must come together to build a new world, so that “the People shall continue.”

*In My Mother’s House* by Ann Nolan Clark, illustrated by Velino Herrera (Penguin, 1991). This is another book which expresses pueblo life through poetry and artwork. Each poem and photo captures an aspect of life for the Tewa tribe. It is another source to help children capture aspects of this Native American culture, as interpreted through poetry and illustration.



## Book & Movie Reviews - Understanding Global Transformation in the 21st Century

Social studies teachers face a uniquely difficult curricular challenge: we must negotiate standardized, textbook-based curricula that promote and reinforce a limited and often distorted view of history. I believe teachers who restrict themselves to standardized curricula serve as propagandists for the established order. To help students develop critical consciousness and to struggle for a democratic society, teachers must introduce a wide variety of information and viewpoints. This is difficult because few people have the time and energy to conduct the wide-ranging research necessary to counter dominant accounts of U.S. and global history. There are two remedies to this problem. First, we can undertake such historical investigation with students and make interrogation of the textbook a central aspect of classroom practice. Second, we can network in teacher communities devoted to sharing valuable curricular resources. Many of the books reviewed in this section are densely written, refer to a wide range of historical events and figures, and contain extended passages. They are recommended primarily for teachers, however selections can be edited for student use. Books are listed alphabetically by author. – Michael Pezone

**Peter Bate (Director). *Congo: White King, Red Rubber, Black Death* (2004, English/French/Dutch with English subtitles) - Reviewed by Martin P. Felix**

This documentary brings to the silver screen the unspeakable horrors of Belgian colonialism in the Congo. It begins with scenes of terror, Congolese children, men and women without their hands. Their hands were cut off by the colonizers and their puppet troops in a macabre system of accounting. Hands were cut off because workers didn't work fast enough. Children's hands were chopped off as punishment for late deliveries of rubber. Hands were used by the puppet troops to "prove" they hadn't wasted bullets on hunting game, an offense in the eyes of the colonialists. Later in the film an African chief employs another kind of accounting: a fact-finding commission views a huge bundle of sticks representing the chief's many missing villagers. Such stories about the destruction of villages, rape and torture abound in the film.

The fanatical rush for colonies, rubber and other raw materials was part of the drive to industrialize Europe. Africa's valuable resources helped usher in Europe's motorized transportation and the proliferation of many other commodities. During the Belgian reign of terror, John Dunlop created the pneumatic tire, setting off a surge in bicycle sales and creating a huge demand for rubber latex and wild Congolese vine rubber.

In order to maximize exploitation of Africa and to ease conflict among themselves, European imperialist powers sat around tables in Berlin, Germany, between 1884 and 1885 and decided the colonial fate of Africa. Like butchers with knives dripping blood, the imperialists divided the continent into spoils. No regard was given to traditional borders or other historical factors. It was to Congo's misfortune that

King Leopold was given the largest and, soon to become evident, richest chunk of the richest continent.

The film presents in almost elementary fashion the machinery of colonialism. It sheds light on how Belgium used European soldiers, administrators, businesspersons, missionaries, journalists and African collaborators to set in motion a system that transformed the huge, resource-rich, heart of Africa into a zone of death and conflict. Over the next 20 years of direct Belgian rule, 10 million Africans would die by murder, disease and the deplorable conditions of life. Resistance was put down by wanton murder and what today we would call "ethnic cleansing." In the meantime, the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber and Exploration Company racked up 700 percent profits on shipments of rubber from the Congo. The company's stock-market valuation increased 30 times in six years, while King Leopold was celebrated in European capitals as a humane and progressive pioneer of Christian values in "darkest Africa."

The film includes intermittent scenes from an imagined trial of Leopold, placing the responsibility for "civilizing" the Congo on his shoulders. Leopold's role was given too much emphasis, while a wider concert of sadistic players in a global system got too little attention. The film reminds us that the hunt for the Congo's enormous riches, including metals for the burgeoning telecommunications, gaming, and electronics industries, is not yet over.

**Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization* (NY: Oxford). – Reviewed by Parag Joshi.**

Writing this review on my laptop (made in Japan) while drinking coffee (from Ethiopia), and checking for an email from a friend in Barcelona, this reviewer (who immigrated from India at the age of 6) is keenly

aware of economic globalization. If we are to believe the commentators, protestors, and yes, Bono, economic globalization is not merely *an* issue of our day – it is *the* issue. The wonderful (or dreadful) news is that they are largely right.

If Thomas Friedman's recent exhortations (in *The World Is Flat*) about the leveling of the playing field between the "rich west and the striving rest" in the last decade are correct, an important acceleration of economic globalization has occurred. According to Friedman and others, technological (broadband, computers, etc.) and market forces (and the incentives they create) have fueled this change from the developed world, while massive surpluses of science graduates and a hunger for economic growth have fueled this change from the other side.

But should we view this ongoing economic globalization as a force for the greater good, or more fearfully, as a race to the bottom? How should national governments around the world work together to manage this new, more forceful version of economic globalization?

Jagdish Bhagwati is a leading developmental economist who is perennially short-listed for the Nobel Prize in economics and has been referred to as "the world's foremost free trader." Over the years, he has worked with the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, and the International Monetary Fund, and has been credited with playing a key role in convincing policymakers in India and other developing nations to open the country to international economic forces. Bhagwati frames economic globalization as the "integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, direct foreign investment (by corporations and multinationals), short-term capital flows, international flows of workers and humanity generally, and flows of technology."

Bhagwati draws a complex web of benefits from economic globalization that are created and sustained by the actions of important actors working through motives of both profit and altruism. These organizations include national governments, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Labor Union, and especially the World Trading Organization. His central argument is that economic globalization (properly managed) fosters a virtuous cycle toward creating stable, democratic, and prosperous nations. Much of the book consists of

rebuttals to the principal arguments of globalization's critics.

As a self-described free-trader, I expected Bhagwati to be a staunch defender of globalization, but he offers several important caveats to the management of economic globalization. Specifically, he is decidedly against what he calls "Gung-ho Financial Capitalism," the "Treasury-Wall Street Complex," and "Crony Capitalism."

One of the values of this book is in the presentation of a largely non-ideological argument that the benefits of economic globalization (properly managed) far exceed their costs. Bhagwati relies exclusively on empirical evidence on widely-accepted quantitative quality of life indicators (e.g. life span, incomes, infant mortality) for his support of economic globalization. He flatly states that free trade is an instrument for the reduction of poverty, and that that is its test of goodness.

**Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (NY: Henry Holt, 2003).** - Reviewed by Michael Pezone.

The basic thesis of *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* is that humankind faces possible worldwide catastrophe unless the world capitalist system is reorganized in a revolutionary fashion. For Chomsky, the hegemonic world order is overseen by the United States, which uses its economic and military power to preserve and extend its control of world resources and people. He characterizes the US "imperial grand strategy" and "mission of global management" as "containing other centers of world power within the 'overall framework of order' managed by the United States; maintaining control of the world's energy supplies; barring unacceptable forms of independent nationalism; and overcoming 'crises of democracy' within domestic enemy territory" (16).

This mission has been implemented in various ways since the end of World War Two, but under the current Bush administration has taken extreme forms, especially evident in the doctrine and practice of "preventive war". Chomsky quotes establishment historian Arthur Schlesinger, who wrote: "The president has adopted a policy of 'anticipatory self-defense' that is alarmingly similar to the policy that imperial Japan employed at Pearl Harbor, on a date which, as an earlier American president said it would,

lives in infamy. . . today it is Americans who live in infamy” (12).

In order to maintain control of world resources, US rulers are committed to a policy of “full spectrum dominance” (military superiority on land, sea, in the air, and in space). Chomsky cites US military leaders who reason that globalization is bringing about “a widening between ‘have’ and ‘have-nots’” which will lead to unrest among the have-nots (240). As revealed in the US Space Command’s *Vision for 2020*, the goal of militarization of space is “dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investments” (229).

According to Chomsky, to pursue its imperialist ambitions, the US demonstrates contempt for international law and is the world’s leading sponsor of terrorism, a reality not perceived within the constraints of official definitions that limit terrorism to actions of the weak. “If the doctrinal requirement is lifted, however, we find that, like most weapons, terror is primarily a weapon of the powerful.” (189)

For Chomsky, US policies “flow from an institutional framework of domestic power, which remains fairly stable. Economic decision-making is highly centralized, and John Dewey scarcely exaggerated when he described politics as ‘the shadow cast on society by big business’” (15). He defines the US political system as a polyarchy, not a democracy; that is, a “system of elite decision-making and public ratification” (5).

Chomsky argues that 9-11-01 and the “war on terror” have been used as an opportunity to roll back progressive gains made over the last century, to discipline the population, and to pursue a radical right-wing agenda. In the face of growing discontent, the Bush forces have adopted “the classic strategy” of “an endangered right-wing oligarchy”, which is to create a climate of jingoism. Those at the center of power “declare that it is unpatriotic and disruptive to question the workings of authority - but patriotic to institute harsh and regressive policies that benefit the wealthy, undermine social programs that serve the needs of the great majority, and subordinate a frightened population to increased state control” (217).

As social studies teachers, it is our responsibility to help students “question the workings of authority.” Noam Chomsky has been described as “the most important intellectual alive today.” Students ought to be familiar with the ideas of Chomsky and others who

challenge accepted views and hold out the possibility that “another world is possible.” A democratic education requires no less.

**Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (NY: Norton, 1997).** – By Lorriane Lupinskie-Huvane.

Every teacher of world history should read *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. Jared Diamond, a physiology and geography professor at UCLA, examines themes and trends throughout history to account for the development of different societies throughout the world. He seeks to explain why history happened one way and not another. Why did Europeans conquer the Americas and not the other way around?

The book seeks to answer a question asked of Diamond by a native of New Guinea in 1972. “Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo (materials goods) and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?” Diamond argues that in 11,000 BCE, with humans on all of the major continents, it “could not have been predicted on which continent human societies would develop most quickly.” He identifies the factors he believes have determined the varying fates of human societies since then.

Section 2, The Rise and Spread of Food Production, is especially useful for teachers. In seven chapters, Diamond traces the development of agriculture. A chart titled “Factors Underlying the Broadest Pattern of History,” shows the factors that allowed some people to conquer others. I use this chart in my AP World History course to reinforce some of the major trends in world history. Also included in this section are a number of easy to understand maps. An especially useful map indicates the centers of the origin of food production and it can be used effectively with a chart detailing the early major crops from the ancient world.

In Section 3, Diamond focuses on guns, germs, and steel as the proximate causes that determined who would have the cargo and who would not. Diamond clearly shows his bent towards science, especially as he describes the development of epidemic disease. The chapter “Lethal Gift of Livestock” is definitely accessible to more advanced students.

Finally, in Section 4, the history of five different societies is presented within the context provided in the previous chapters. In examining the history of the Americas, Diamond argues that differences in food

production and animal domestication set the stage for “Europeans to reach and conquer the lands of Native Americans, instead of vice versa.”

Woven throughout the book are detailed descriptions of the biological and geographic factors that impacted on the progress, or the lack of, in different societies. While the “science” of his explanations may seem complicated, Diamond presents his theories in an understandable fashion. I find that student who have read *Guns, Germs, and Steel* can clearly articulate the geographic circumstances that hindered the progress of New Guinea and other locations and Diamond’s other main ideas.

Diamond has his critics, most notably historians who argue that his version of history discounts the role of the individual and the significance that conscious action has played throughout history. Regardless of where you stand on this controversy, the book should be on every world history teachers must read list. It is a reminder that there are always varying interpretations of historical events and processes and that it is our responsibility to present these different perspectives to our students.

**Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (NY: Basic, 2002) – Reviewed by Gloria Sesso.**

Niall Ferguson argues that Empires can be a positive force. He praises the successes of the British Empire and argues that the United States, the successor to the global power first wielded by the British, can learn from its rise and fall.

In 1897, when Queen Victoria celebrated her diamond jubilee, Britain controlled 444 million people living on 25% of the world’s land surface. What is more, Britain did it cheaply and with a surprisingly small bureaucracy. The Indian Civil Service, the backbone of the Raj, rarely numbered more than 1,000 men. Britain also spent a minimum on its armed forces, much less than the United States did during the Cold War. At the time, London was banker to the world and the British held over 40% of all foreign owned assets.

According to Ferguson, Britain was a positive force for good in the world as it disseminated the English language, English forms of land tenure, Scottish and English banking practices, team sports, Protestantism and governmental practices such as Common Law, the limited state, representative assemblies and the idea of liberty. “The idea of liberty”

was the most important “because it remains the most distinctive feature of the Empire - the thing that set it apart from its continental European rivals.” Ferguson is quick to point out that he is not saying that the British imperialists were liberals. He is saying that whenever the British were behaving despotically, there was always a “liberal critique” from segments of British society. The negative aspects of imperialism are not denied. He identifies the effects on the colonized and their culture, enslavement and the brutality of officials. However, the negative aspects are overshadowed by the positive impact of British globalization which he calls “Anglobalization.”

For Ferguson, the end of the British Empire is a noble one. The British exhausted themselves fighting the Axis powers in World War II. Faced with nationalist movements, the British gave up. Ferguson thinks this is unfortunate and he points out the unhappy fate of many new countries.

This book is useful to classroom teachers in many ways. It is an “unapologetic defense of empire” and its stories can be used to provide teachers with a positive view of imperialism. That stirs up food for debate, especially Ferguson’s notion that imperialism spreads British liberty. This book presents a controversial point of view but it does it in an entertaining and analytical way. It is food for thought and classroom strategy development.

**Amy and David Goodman. *The Exception to the Rule: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them* (NY: Hyperion Books, 2004). - Reviewed by Nicholas Santora.**

Amy Goodman is a journalist in the best sense of the word. She is a serious, unabashed muckraker in an age of mass media conformity. Goodman is best known as the host of *Democracy Now!*, a daily investigative news-talk program that airs on Pacifica Radio and satellite television ([www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)). It is a no-nonsense program that covers incidents in troubled nations such as Haiti and Sudan that the major corporate-owned networks will not give the time of day to. While the issue of prisoner abuse at Guantanamo Bay took a back seat in the mainstream press, *Democracy Now!* reminded listeners of its continuing relevance. Those who accuse Goodman of advocacy journalism might want to trace the events that led to the current Iraqi conflict and the

questionable reporting by supposedly esteemed journals such as *The New York Times*.

This book, *The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them* (co-written with her brother David Goodman), delivers exactly as the title states. The authors delineate the lies, fraud and outright crimes of the American power elite reinforced by media conglomerates. Her contretemps with Newt Gingrich and Bill Clinton is alone worth the price of the book. From the Jessica Lynch hoax to the trial of Mumia Abu Jamal, Goodman warns readers that “journalists are not entertainers”. There are issues that are vital to a democratic society. A symbiotic relationship between the corporate media and the officials they report on is socially, politically and economically dangerous.

Goodman’s search for the truth has taken her all over the world and placed her in dangerous situations. In 1991, she traveled to the tiny island nation of East Timor to investigate atrocities. With a gun to her head she was barely able to show the occupiers her passport. When they realized she was from the same country their weapons were from, her life was spared. Goodman was the first person from outside the region to witness and report on the massacres in East Timor.

In 2003, Goodman and journalist Jeremy Scahill documented Chevron Corporation’s role in a confrontation between the Nigerian army and villagers who had seized oil rigs and other equipment belonging to transnational oil corporations. They were protesting the contamination of their land with methane in the air and exploding gas pipelines in the Niger Delta. Chevron provided helicopter transport for the Nigerian Navy and the notorious police force. Soon after landing, the Nigerian military shot two of the protesters and wounded eleven others. A Chevron spokesperson acknowledged that the company transported the troops, and that use of troops was at the request of Chevron’s management. Goodman visited Nigeria to examine this incident and the military junta’s execution of famed Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his compatriots. As in East Timor, her life was in danger. Her description of checkpoint run-ins with rabid and vile soldiers is chilling. Goodman later managed to infiltrate a Chevron shareholders meeting in California. Where she requested that the practice of allowing the

Nigerian military to kill protesters on company sites be curtailed.

This book is published by Hyperion Books, a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. Goodman explained that she had the option of using an independent book company and not reaching nearly the number of potential readers a major publishing company could provide. I suppose we can at times nibble on the claw that feeds us.

**Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes, A History of the World, 1914-1991* (NY: Pantheon, 1994).** - Reviewed by David Goldberg.

*The Age of Extremes* by Eric Hobsbawm provides a broad overview of the Twentieth Century, which the author generally defines as beginning with World War I and ending with the fall of Communism. This is not a typical history book that simply chronicles events. From the outset of the book, Hobsbawm acknowledges that this is “his” history, the way in which he sees and interprets events during this period. He appears to be disappointed with the way the 20th century has turned out, especially in comparison with the 19th Century, which he has written about in earlier work. This book has value for Global History teachers who want to present broad themes on the century in their classes. It can also help students understand the influence of an historians frame of reference on their interpretation of the past.

The book opens with twelve broad conclusions Hobsbawm draws about the 20th century, but his primary conclusion is that it was an age of opposites. Humans learned how to save more lives than ever before, yet we also destroyed more people than in any other historical epoch. Democracy and freedom grew at its fastest rate in human history, yet so did totalitarianism and dictatorial regimes. Capitalism expanded exponentially, but so did socialism. Socialism is the form of government that Hobsbawm seems to respect the most. He believes that despite its shortcomings, it had the power to manage human affairs, create a powerful state, and stabilize market forces that would prevent ecological and social meltdowns. Hobsbawm also examines more narrow influences on history but continues to highlight opposites. For example, he explores the way radio changed the lives of the poor and influenced the rise of dictatorships in Europe.



I feel that Hobsbawm treats the largest capitalist nation of them all, the United States, without much respect throughout his book. He provides different perspectives on Ho Chi Minh, who he describes as noble, “the practically minded Khrushchev,” and Fidel Castro, who is “strong and charismatic” and “determined to demonstrate personal bravery and to be a hero of whatever cause of freedom against tyranny.” He cannot even go so far as to condemn the crimes of Joseph Stalin. For Hobsbawm, the West is responsible for the Cold war, with the United States assuming the greatest responsibility.

The study of history and the social studies should gear students toward asking and answering essential questions. Hobsbawm leaves teachers and students of world history with two large questions that will have monumental consequences on the history of the future: “Is capitalism the primary cause of crises in our world today?” and, “Is the world suffering from the negative consequences of the “privatization of life” and the growth of “consumer egoism?” Other essential questions that emerge from this book include: “What should be the role of the world’s super power?” “Has capitalism kept third world nations poor?” “Did the Left’s vision of a utopia in the twentieth century lead to the rise of extremism in the twenty-first century?”

Hobsbawm sees no great victory for humanity in the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism in the 20th century. As these forces continue to shape the 21st century, and their impact accelerates with computerization and globalization, students and their teachers need to discuss whether we are trapped in the dismal world described by Eric Hobsbawm or there is an expanded possibility for a more hopeful future.

**Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (NY: Random House, 1987).** - Reviewed by Michael Kreidman.

Over the years, historians, politicians, and many others have wondered why some nations become more powerful than others, only to lose their superior positions. This is an especially compelling issue because in recent years we have witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of China, and the economic problems of the United States that appear to be connected to its global military commitments.

Paul Kennedy, the Dilworth Professor of History at Yale University, exhaustively researches the economic and military abilities of nations since 1500 AD. He

concludes that economically advanced nations develop the military might to protect their interests and impose their will. However, the power of the nation declines if its military expenditures and commitments impede its economy. “In the post-feudal age, when knights were no longer expected to perform individual military services. . . nor coastal towns to provide a ship, the availability of ready cash and the possession of good credit were absolutely essential to any state engaged in war. Only by direct payment (or promise of payment) could the necessary [resources] be mobilized within the market economy [to prepare for combat.]”

A point I found particularly interesting is his argument that the inability of any single power to take over Europe led to economic and military competition that contributed to innovation in both areas. By contrast, the leaders of China and the Ottoman Empire concentrated on suppressing internal dissent rather than promoting innovation.

*The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* provides teachers with over 50 useful charts, tables and maps that illustrate the author’s main points. One chart demonstrates Britain’s ability to raise the enormous capital necessary to support a massive military during its age of empire. To explain the outcome of World War I, he analyzes the productive capabilities of the Triple Entente and the Central Powers and how the entry of the United States changed this economic balance. Another shows how from 1980 to 2020, the economies of China and India will grow far faster than those of Western Europe. It suggests the enormous potential of these countries to emerge as super-powers.

I look forward to using material from this book to design lessons around the following questions. Why did Western Europe dominate much of global politics from 1500 AD onwards when there were other areas more advanced? How did France, Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, or the United States rise to preeminent status in the world? Why are so many Americans worried about China?”

**David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (NY: Norton, 1998).** – Reviewed by Steven Havick.

Several years ago a student in my 12th grade Economics class asked me why certain countries were impoverished. While I cannot recall all the possible explanations I offered, I do remember responding that the answer is deeply complex, multi-layered, and

contingent on numerous variables. I added that anyone who could answer that question definitively should write a book about it. David Landes' provocative and engaging book is one historian's attempt to answer my student's question.

Unfortunately, Landes' book is Eurocentric, virtually ignoring human history before the closing centuries of the Middle Ages, and his thesis relies too heavily on cultural determinism. He asserts that certain Western cultural institutions and attributes, aided by favorable geography, are the primary reasons for European wealth and power the past five hundred years. Landes suggests that the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent primacy of Western Europe (and the United States) is owed largely to a special sense of curiosity and conception of human progress, cultural attributes that, in his eyes, are lacking in the non-European world. Among these cultural qualities are respect for the rule of law and private property, a tradition of dissent, a lack of authoritarianism, and respect for women's rights, intellectual freedom, and civil liberties. At the core of these is the so-called Protestant work ethic.

Commentators have credited Landes with moving beyond a traditional historical perspective that focuses on kings, dynasties, and wars. However, this book represents only a slight departure from traditional history. Landes simply repackages the story most of us were taught in high school and college Western Civilization classes, a story that has been used to justify Western domination over the world which minimizes racism and aggression. The genocidal land-grab by white Americans is given a one-page treatment in the book while topics such as techniques used in steel production receive numerous full pages. The theft of native land becomes a mere footnote in the story of American economic ascendancy. While Landes' answer to my student's question fails to explain the relationship between progress and wealth, I did find things of value in the book. Its wide scope and rich narrative provide excellent reference material that enriches content knowledge about large swaths of history.

Landes claims that he is delivering the historical Truth about why the world looks the way it does. In the classroom, selected passages from *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* can be used to help students understand the process of historical analysis and build their critical thinking skills. Here I am reminded of

Fredrich Nietzsche's statement that "A great truth wants to be criticized, not idolized." The real growth for our students occurs in spaces that social studies teachers carve out for critique. This book will be a valuable tool for teaching if one uses it to encourage critical discussion of Landes' thesis and provoke deep thought about the function of historical disagreement.

**Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence. China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2000).** – Reviewed by Lawrence Frohman.

When it appeared five years ago, *The Great Divergence* became an instant classic that refigured the way that historians and economists think about the origins of European industrialization and the divergent developmental trajectories followed by Europe and the major civilizations of Asia (China, India, Japan). *The Great Divergence* is a complex work that operates at several different levels, all of which are directly relevant to the way we conceptualize world history in the modern era and teach the global history curriculum.

Historians and textbooks generally examine the European (and especially the English) past to find factors such as property guarantees, contracts, Max Weber's rationalism, or the spirit of entrepreneurship or science, that would account for the rise of Europe to world dominance in the 19th century. Pomeranz challenges this approach. He compares the more commercially developed regions of both Europe and Asia and concludes that before 1750-1800 there were no fundamental differences in technology, social institutions, or mentality in these regions that could account for the differences in economic power and wealth that would be so evident a century later.

Pomeranz raises the question of how one can grasp the unity of world history in the absence of a master narrative organized around "the rise of the west." He writes of "a polycentric world with no dominant center." The book offers comparative method for the study of world history based on the mutual or reciprocal comparison of different societies, rather than the search for national deviations from a Western developmental norm.

If these regional societies were more similar than different going into the second half of the 1700s, and if there is no normal path to capitalist modernity, then how does Pomeranz explain the great divergence? He

argues that the decisive factor in the great divergence was the historically contingent conquest of the New World. Control of these plantation colonies directed them down the path of capital intensive economic development that eventually gave rise to that dynamic of self-sustaining growth identified by Walter Rostow and David Landes as the distinguishing feature of the modern economy.

The strength of Pomeranz' work comes from the specific ways in which he makes the linkages between colonial conquest and economic development in the European metropolises. Extra-market forces, the growth of state power, expansion of merchant capital, slavery, and the plantation system, explain why the European economy was able to develop along a trajectory that the Asian powers could not follow. Plantation colonies provided Europe with the land-intensive primary products needed to transcend ecological constraints, an outlet for its surplus population, and a growing market for metropolitan manufactures, and it did so in ways that encouraged the development of capital intensive industrial manufacture and insured its profitability.

In China, India, and Japan the industrial regions of these countries did not dominate or coercively exploit their own domestic peripheries in the same manner that the Europeans dominated the plantation colonies of the Atlantic. The absence of such a colonial stimulus directed the economies of Asia down a different economic path characterized by the broad diffusion of labor-intensive handicraft production, the negation of productivity gains by population growth, and long-term stagnation.

**Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (NY: Vintage, 1994).** – Reviewed by Laura Vosswinkel.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said analyzes literature to show the complexity of imperialism and its continuing impact. The focus in this book is on

European literature written during the “age of empire” and contemporary literature produced in non-Western societies. Said does not believe that either the oppressors (the Europeans) or the oppressed are solely to blame for conditions in the modern world. He feels we need to “look at these matters as a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand” (19).

Among other authors, Said examines the work of Salman Rushdie, W.B. Yeats, Chinua Achebe, Goethe, and Jane Austen. He tries to discover both what major works of literature say about history and how they have shaped history. I found his discussion of rivers in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* and James Ngugi's (Ngugi wa Thiongo) *The River Between* interesting and believe it would provide students with insight into African and European cultures and enhance their understanding of the tension generated by imperialist conquest. In *The River Between*, the river is powerful, deliberate, possess a strong will to live, and is capable of making people happy. The white man is not important compared to the river. However, in *The Heart of Darkness*, the white man, not the river, takes center stage.

Said writes of both the positive and negative cultural impact of imperialism. “Its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental” (336). As a result of imperialism, people insist on separation and harbor fears and prejudice about those different from themselves. He claims this is apparent in most postcolonial literature. However, survival is about making connections, not pigeonholing humans and creating hierarchies. Said feels it is important to the study of the literature and the development of society to strive to overcome patterns of separation.

### **Silk, Salt, Fur and Spices: Introducing Global Interaction into the Elementary School Curriculum with National Geographic Theme Sets**

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